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HEAVEN'S METAL

Old school, new school, whatever...

I'm dangerous sometimes. I'll get an idea and run with it. Having a magazine makes it easy for these ideas to get "out there" and shared with you. On this one, I have to be honest and admit that I kinda bullied the crew to get my way on this one. There was no real bickering or arguing, but I was quick to fire off reasons as to why breaking the "norm" we've established was a good idea. We'll see what you guys think later (send us letters for "Doug's Mailbag," come on!). For now, let me just state that Zao is full on heavy and metal. Standing on stage with them at Sonshine 2004 was mind-blowing, feeling the actual stage shake, it made me identify with what it must've been like to stand on a similar stage back in the day when Black Sabbath was freaking people out with their doomy heaviness. Zao are great, and they are touring with big metal bands out there in the world (like In Flames) and their credibility continues to grow. Be sure to check out the "Roadie for Zao at Cornerstone" contest at hmmagazine.com/heavensmetal/

Grace and Peace,



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METAL TRACKS

Hard-news-for-metal-heads



Royal Anguish

BY DANIEL JESSE

Matt Knowles, from Royal Anguish, was nice enough to take some time off from practicing and packing for their European tour to answer a few questions about the tour, and the upcoming release, *A Journey Through the Shadows of Time*.

So, the first thing is, can you talk about your first European tour coming up. What are you looking forward to most?

I know I speak for everyone in saying that we all are anxious to see the difference between American and European crowds. Being able to play in front of fans that may only get a limited number of opportunities to see us, as well as to meet some longtime contacts, will be great.

Another question about the tour: What bands are you most looking forward to playing with, and why? And / or who are you most excited to meet?

For me I am most looking to play with Eluveitie. I love their sound and I think it will be killer to see them pull off their unique sound live. I think we're all looking forward to meeting the guys from the label, the bands, and the European fans.

What festival / show is Royal Anguish looking forward to play the most?

I don't really think there's one in particular. Being able to take the stage at the Fear Dark Festivals will be excellent, period.

How did this all come about?

Upon signing with Fear Dark they were adamant about us getting to Europe to play some shows. This tour has been their brainchild from the very beginning.

News bullets

Tykküs is looking for a new lead vocalist asap. Their singer recently left to pursue a solo act. They are very active and show and recording times are pending. They have played with Dokken, Holy Soldier, Neon Cross, Vengeance Rising, Ultimatum, Rivera/Bomma, etc. Check out tykkus.com to see what they are all about. Above all else, qualified applicants need to be ministry minded. If interested, email them to set up an audition.

Since **Robert Sweet** is very busy with **Stryper** and **Blissed** is accelerating in popularity, they have chosen **Nathan Kojak** to fill in as drummer. The band describes him as "vicious" on the drums, and "very, very entertaining." Blissed has begun shooting music videos that will be spread over 19 locations. May 12th Blissed played with the Daniel Band in Sarnia, Ontario, Canada.

Victory At Last is looking for a new drummer. The band will record again soon.

After months of hard work and auditioning, **Brandon Evrard** of Marion, IL is the official new drummer for **Convicted**.

With Faith Or Flames is looking for a new guitarist to replace Dustin Lane.

1 Method's former drummer is now a missionary in Romania, and was replaced with **Brandon Carter**, and their former guitarist has returned. 1 Method has been picked up by Charis Core Management who will be handle all of the band's booking, distribution, and promotion. *Bleed This Heart Of Stone*, their new EP, should be released by the beginning of the *Bleeding Hearts Tour*, 7/19. The band would appreciate anyone who would help them with a place to stay while on the road.

After 1 1/2 years off due to illness, **Michael Bloodgood** is finishing his worship CD with the working title *Michael Bloodgood and Friends*. Fans will be excited to know that a new **Bloodgood** CD is in the works. Mr. Bloodgood and his family recently visited the HM Ranch (even played a game of kickball), where he announced that a Bloodgood reunion is official (with **Paul Jackson**, **Les Carlson** joining him thus far).

Stryper is doing an acoustic church tour, where they have made a point of not having a "meet and greet" session afterward to give all of the glory to God.

Bombworks Records announces 3 new bands: 1) Power metal band **Adiastasia** hails from Brazil and sounds somewhat like Helloween and Gamma Ray. Their debut album, *Life War*, will contain 11 tracks of "blistering technical power metal." 2) Black and thrash metal with Hispanic roots create a unique brutal repertoire from Puerto Rico's **Azmaveth**. *Strong As Death* is their 13-song extreme metal debut. 3) California's





RA cont'd

Can you comment on moving over to Fear Dark? Does this move in labels mean that RA is going to focus on the European scene more than the US scene?

I don't know if it means more of a focus, but we know that Europe seemingly is more receptive to our style of music. It has been a very good start to working with Fear Dark. The guys that run it are all very nice and operate with integrity. We've been very happy thus far with the way they have dealt with us.

Let's shift to the new album. What changes can we expect in your sound?

The new CD, *A Journey Through the Shadows of Time*, pretty much picks up where *Tales of Sullen Eyes* left off. Very aggressive music with a lot of diversity. Dueling heavy male vocals and pristine female vocals, keys, very melodic guitar solos, etc... The album does contain a lot of classical guitars (as showcased in the song "Eternal") as well as under multiple narrations in the 20-minute epic, which closes the CD entitled "The Battle of Jericho and eNon."

And it seems that "epic" songs are done by the European power metal crowd. What inspired you guys (and girl) to go in this way? Does the epic song tie in concepts (both lyrically and musically) from the rest of the album, or does it stand on it's own? Do you want to do more epics, or a full concept album in the future?

The epic, "The Battle of Jericho and eNon," stands on its own on the cd lyrically, but musically its consistent with the rest of the cd. The initial idea came from a dream that I had about five or six years ago. I took notes of the dream and then over time worked it (with a little help along the way) until it was in its finished story form. Its about twenty minutes long, but its broken up into eight tracks that all can stand on their own. Its four full songs and four nar-

rative pieces. As for doing a full concept cd or doing more epics, I don't really have any desire one-way or the other. Whatever we end up writing is what we write. If its a full concept cd, great. If its another epic, cool. If its just regular songs, fine by me.

There is a balance between Death Metal and a more progressive sound, without moving towards what Into Eternity, Mercenary, and Scar Symmetry are doing.

Right. The bands mentioned above have taken a more "power metal" route to what they are doing, while our sound is more towards the death/ black/ extreme sound.

We mentioned the bands that are using more of a power-metal base for their "hybrid" sound. Do you see this to be the way metal is going, or do you think that there is going to be a return to the more death metal roots, like you are doing?

It's hard to say. You never know what turn the market is going to take.

Phrased another way, do you think that what you are doing is going to catch on in the larger scene?

I'd like to see it catch on sure. Of course we'd like to be at the front of the pack setting the trend. But we'll just have to see what happens...

Do you find sticking to more of the Florida Death Metal sound as a base helps maintain something unique, or do you want to head in the aforementioned bands direction in the future?

We just write how we write. We aren't intending to take our sound in a specific direction. Whatever we feel inspired to write and play is what comes out.



Tortured Conscience will release their first full-length debut, *Every Knee Shall Bow*. Featuring members of grind act **Vulgar Pigeons**, Tortured Conscience grinds through 10 brutal tracks. The last track is a cover of the Bloodgood classic "Crucify."

Disciple has started writing and recording a new disc. On 6/3 these metallists will release a CD/DVD which will have the complete self-titled album, and four previously unreleased Disciple songs.

An **Akacia** track appears on a Moody Blues tribute CD (Italy) called *Higher and Higher: a Tribute to the Moody Blues*. Their 3rd album, *This Fading Time*, should be released this spring.

Transfigural Form has begun recording the follow up to *Blood*. There is no set date as to when the follow up album will be released, if ever. Unfortunately for the fans, without a label to back the band, there will not be a street or online release, just ten songs recorded and shelved until one is acquired. This disc promises to have much better production as well as a mix of thrash and speed metal with the death metal vocals that TF is known for.

39 Lashes has been approached by a record label. The band asks for prayer of God's will. Guitarist **David Holman** is expecting a second baby.

Kekal's new album will be available 7/06. Recently released: **Drottmar** – *Welterwerk*, **Cloudscape** – *Crimson Skies* (includes bonus track), **Katagory V** – *The Rising Anger*, **Prototype** – *Continuum*, **Blissed** – *Corrosive*.

Aletheian has another pressing of *Dying Vine* for their tour, which has updated artwork and an updated master. Since the band will give away free copies for joining their upcoming fan club, they ask that fans don't buy it if they already own a copy. Aletheian is involved in two tours: *Hell Freezes Over* with **Becoming the Archetype**, **Inked In Blood**, and **Society's Finest**; and the *Crimson Moonlight Tour*, which will include the band by the same name, and BTA. The correct dates Aletheian will play Cornerstone are: Wed 7/05 on Sanctuary Stage at 11 pm, and Fri 07/07 RFL Stage (time uncertain). Hope Prevails Productions will have a vendor booth there all week.

"Variation On A Theme By Sir Oz Fox, T.H.W.T.D. No. 6," is exclusively available on the *Christian Metal Realm's Compilation CD Volume II*. Composed by keyboardist **Joseph Anastacio Glean** and played by **Valediction**, this Stryper cover has a neoclassical touch right down to the subtitle, "Little Overture for Electric Guitar and Rock Ensemble." For more info visit valediction.com.

Cornerstone IL info: HM Magazine Stage Lineup in order every night: Wed 7/5 **Inked In Blood**, **Alove For Enemies**, **Bloodlined Calligraphy**, **Disciple**; Thur 7/6 **Man Alive**, **Brandston**, **Bernard**, **Mute Math**; Fri 7/7 **Spitfire**, **Chasing Victory**, **Billy Lamont**, **The Showdown**, **Becoming the Archetype**; 7/8 **The Satire**, **Bradley Hathaway**, **August Burns Red**, **Showbread**. Bands are subject to change. For more info, visit the Cornerstone Festival website.

Four former band members of **Wedding Party** will play at Cornerstone in their new band, **I-Dragon-I**. They will hit the Sanctuary Stage at Cornerstone on Friday 7/7. **Will** and **Jamie** are writing the music, **Libbey** is singing backup vocals. **Sean Savacool** is playing bass.

METAL TRACKS

Page 6



ESSENTIAL METAL/HARDCORE...

Your Revolver article was very professional, extremely well informed and written. Nice job!
-Matt Hunt, via internet

Ed - Thanks! That is very encouraging. You are a lucky dog, being a subscriber, as I haven't seen a copy yet! Revolver asked me for a list of "10 Essential Christian Metal/Hardcore albums" for their June/July double issue. I wasn't supposed to heavy load it with old, out-of-print albums, otherwise some essential gems like Precious Death, Deliverance, and Tourniquet would've been on there... The thing with lists that stinks is no two people's list will be the same. Ah well, it was fun.

SIMPLE PAPER

Hello Doug,
Thanx for the new (OLD) heavens metal! I like it, with the simple paper, it's underground!
Greetings from Germany.
-Metal Benni, via internet

PYRAMAZE = TERMAZE?

So, when I saw the name Pyramaze in HM, I thought, "Wow... that sounds alot like a band called Teramazé that I like." Now I'm listening to them on the sampler, and the singer sounds like the guy from Teramazé. Is this the same band??
-Bryan, via internet

Ed - No. Teramazé was from Australia, and Pyramaze (from Denmark) is one of Lance King's new bands. But it just goes to show ya: subscribing to HM is a worthy investment (sampler CDs)...

PRISONER APPRECIATION

I wanted to thank you guys for your magazine. Although I am an old rocker myself, I am not into the headbanger and other genres of today. My prefs are Larry Norman, Whiteheart, Rez, Stryper, BarrenCross, Gaurdian, etc of the 70s through the 80s (although I do like Aleixa and maybe one of Beanbag's songs...). BUT that's not the point. My nephew who, is in Texas Youth Corrections (TYC) Facility in McClennan County, Texas loves the guys you write about. He is the one I have the magazine sent to and I wanted to take a moment and let you folks know how much I appreciate what you do. There wasn't much for us back in the early 70's to publicize good bands that also loved God. Your mag is letting Kendall know about the alternatives to the shi...stuff he was listening

to. He was even listening to {SHUDDER} Hip-Hop and Rap because of the gang clientel mixture in TYC. There is a station in north Texas that plays some of the good stuff you write about. Check out the web-site 897powerfm.com sometime. They are a non-profit and do some good stuff for the area. Maybe you guys could advertise there or whatever. Also, be sure and have the renewal notices sent to me because I don't want Kendall to think he has to pay for them. Keep up the great work! SreWolfe
-Ray Flowers, via internet

Ed - I hate to break it to ya, Ray, but with that list of bands you rattled off, you are indeed into "headbanger stuff."

A TRUE BLAST FROM THE PAST

Dear Doug,
This is Jim LaVerde once again. I am truly sorry that I wasn't able to talk to you very much when we were in Pasadena (TX, 1986). I really wanted to talk more, but there was a lot of confusion. "You know how it is." Well, maybe we can talk on the phone. My home # is (213) 767-5083. Please keep this # to your self. Well, anyway, I am glad you liked the show. The other concerts went well also. Do you remember when you gave me my copy of Heaven's Metal? Well, I took it and gave it to Bobby Sweet. Well, he read it and said, "This is really great." Well, things are going really well with B.C. Since we have gotten back from Texas, we have really grown closer as a band spiritually. We also have been writing new material for our second album. Well, anyway Doug, feel free to call and talk. God bless.
-Jim LaVerde, SoCal

Ed - Well, Jim, you'll be happy to know that I've kept that private home number to myself all these years - until now. From my perspective, if I may, let me offer some advice to you: When you get copies of State of Control from the labels (both Enigma and Benson), stash a few cases away in a safe place. They're going to be worth a lot of money on an "internet website" thing called "eBay" someday. Trust me on this. Oh, also: Try to keep Mike Lee in the band. Replacing him probably won't be a good idea. Just don't ever bend on the "Mike doesn't drive the motorhome" rule. Trust me on that one, too.

[nothin' but] News bullets

Also formerly of Wedding Party, **Sheri** is flying in from Sweden with her guitar player. Her band, **Lucifer's Key**, will join Libbey on the Asylum stage 7/6. There will be a Wedding Party Reunion after I-Dragon-I plays.

All original members of **Stevie & The Saints** have reunited, are recording a new CD, and will play at Cornerstone in IL on Thursday night.

Becoming The Archetype will "destroy" European countries as well as 30+ states with their upcoming tour.

Neon Cross played the National Orange Festival on 5/29. They are working to have an upcoming CD done soon.

Guardian's Jamie Rowe was "stoked" that no one was home when a humongous tree hit his house in Fort Branch, IN. The tree hit the second story of his house, bounced to the overhang above his porch, then into his yard and spread across the street. Jamie is thankful, because the damage could have been much worse. See a pic and article from a local newspaper at: tristate-media.com/articles/2006/05/11/pdclarion/news/news2.txt. Jamie did not make the final cut of *Rockstar: SuperNova*. **Guardian** is confirmed for the ARPA Awards in Mexico City this October. Guardian songs are now available for music download at some download stores including itunes.

Alex Thompson is going through Air Force training in TX. **Bride's** former drummer is now replaced by **Denny Johnson** (The Bullet Boys). Despite recent surgery, Denny will be on the new Bride CD. Pray for his complete healing as he will face more surgery later this year. The CD is in heavy preproduction and the new release date is 7/2. On 10/7, Bride will return to Brazil for a 10-day tour where they pack out stadiums.

Once Nothing has a list of cities in many states that they would like to book at Myspace.

Heaven's Metal knows of two Christian bands who have been hacked into on Myspace: **Family Force Five**, who recently apologized for bulletins not done by them, and **Once Nothing** who stated, "We're not into that "whoring" crap or whatever it is called, apparently, we've been hacked." The hacking has been in the "bulletins" that are posted to all their Myspace friends.

Jeff Scheetz and band (JSB) will be playing the Comstock Festival in Nebraska, July 13 - 16, alongside Kansas, Poison, Ted Nugent, Styx, Puddle of Mudd, Jonny Lang, and Kenny Wayne Shepard.

Tiles is working on its fifth album with producer Terry Brown. They have made available a long lost sound-check jam video with Dream Theater at their site (tiles-music.com/multimedia/112399.mpg).

Circus Dawn's latest project, *Between The Lines Of Gray*, will hit the streets July 4th.



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ZAO | METAL

INTERVIEW BY DOUG VAN PELT



Photo: Steve Trager

If Zao had come out in, say 1995, instead of 1996, perhaps they alone would've kept Heaven's Metal from shortening its name to HM, for they (along with Living Sacrifice) carried the power of metal on through the "underground" phase of metal during the so-called "alternative music revolution" of that era. With a decidedly heavier new album set to unleash this month, it seemed crazy yet appropriate to put them on the cover after being on the phone with frontman Dan Weyandt for two hours.

You recorded this new album with legendary Steve Albini. What sort of plans did you go into this recording with, and how much did the songs change during the process? And how did they change?

A lot of the songs were pretty solid when we went in. I guess for the first time we went in knowing exactly what we wanted to do. There was just a few little things, kind of like recording sounds. Some things were recorded with two different sounds and it just came down to picking what sounded better. We went song for song with the vocals and we'd do them over and go back and listen to it and maybe change a thing here or there, but in all honesty, we didn't deviate too far off the path. The songs didn't really change too much – from the writing to the recording. Besides a few things with the vocals, the music went real fast and real smooth. The actual recording only took a few days.

Wow.

Most of the music was recorded live. It was separated in rooms, so it wasn't like bleeding into each other, but a lot of it's the bass, guitar and drums playing at the same time, isolated. You went back here and there to clean some things up, but overall, a lot of it's like first or second take, even.

How would you compare the feel or vibe of this album with *The Funeral of God*?

I think this one attacks a little more, you know what I mean? There's a lot more social connotations to it. I'd say it's like 50% kind of like social attacking ideas kind of like that, and I'd say 50% of, like, in "Physician Heal Thyself." It's just the irony of the fact that a doctor or surgeon can save people's lives and go in and do operations and heart transplants, but in the end if he was alone and had to do that on himself, he couldn't. It's about how it's strange that we can do all those things for other people, but we can't actually save ourselves, in essence. And that a doctor and a physician dies, 9 times out of 10, sick and alone just like everyone else does, you know? It's strange that a lot of times we have the power to do things for other people, but not ourselves. I kind of leave things with a slight tinge of vagueness, cause I like people to kind of... There's a lot of people that'll say, "I heard this song, and this is what I got out of it." And it might not necessarily be what I planned for people to get out of it, but it's still interesting and such a positive thing. I kind of like to have a little bit of area for people's imaginations to let the song become their own in a sense. Another thing that went on when writing this record is we always try to do something a little different – keep it somewhat interesting and a little bit of suspense in what it's gonna sound like, because it always changes. I don't think, like, super dramatically, but enough that it's different.

I'm not really into trying to do flattery at all, very much, but one thing that I think is beautiful about you as a person is how vulnerable you are and it's kinda cool that you kinda capture the vulnerability in this harsh, incredibly heavy music. Has that ever struck you as weird or has that ever been something that surprised you?

One of the things that initially turned me on to heavy music is, I guess, in a weird way it always kinda sounded desperate to me. You know what I mean?

Uh-huh.

Some of the old bands I listened to and stuff, (it's) kind of like, the only thing left was it just kind of got to the point where all you could do is kind of vent it out, you know? I guess that's how I feel. A lot of the new record is very desperate. I just enjoy sort of the heaviness of the music. To me, in a weird, I can't explain it – subconscious thing in the back of my mind, a lot of heavy music – not just the lyrics, but the tone in the singer's voice or the way the music was constructed, a lot of it always kind of sounded desperate to me. I don't know if that's everybody, but I kinda... On the new record, when I write the songs, they're not songs that are, like, angry. The vocals are more angry. There's some that are more, like, depressed or desperate sounding... Certain songs, when I hear them, they'll seem like an angry song to me. When the guys in the band present me with their music, I'll pick up that. To me, the music's very angry. Some songs to me sound more desperate. There's a couple different facets. I kind of let the songs I write align. That's why I try in advance to get a bunch of lyrics together, that way I'll have my desperate songs and I'll have more of the angry, this or that. Or maybe the social-political stuff or something. And each one sounds a little bit different to me, so I'll try to match it with that. I guess, too, I've always felt very small on this earth, I guess. Not in a depressed sense, but in just the overall scheme of things. Just a little gear in a big machine, ya know? I think a lot of people, especially me, end up getting turned on to heavy music feel that way, too. I think sometimes, for me it literally got me through times in my life, you know?

Uh-huh.

Like, you hear that one song that something clicked, and it gave you enough strength. I think of this, too, when I was a little younger, like the teen years and stuff, when you're going through everything and nothing makes sense. It would kind of give me the stability to go on. I don't know. I just think that is seems like the best in certain music has its place.

What was it like to replace your drummer sometime this past year, especially in light of Scott's comments about, "We will never break up!"

We started, from *The Funeral of God* until pretty much until we quit we were touring non-stop. And on top of that, we were kind of starting over in a sense, so that was a case of touring non-stop and not hardly having anything to show, you know? Steve was actually on the farewell tour as our merch guy. But he was on that tour for, I think, only four weeks. He joined and we did the record and the first thing we did was, like, a seven-week tour. And then after that was

just non-stop. That's the weird thing, I guess, cause you can never get an ultimate promise from somebody sometimes, you know what I mean?

Yeah, yeah.

Like, "I will not quit the band, no matter what." It was good. There was never any personality or friendship issues with Steve, but in the end with this record coming out, I'm kind of glad it happened, because I think that he's happy with what he's doing now and Jeff is a way more technical drummer than Steve. I'll even say that, you know, everyone's always bringing up Jesse. I think he's as good or even better than him. He's got very, very good technical abilities, along with very good timing. His timing is really amazing. There's no click on the new record. There's tracks where we put a little piece in and the timing is perfect. He's like a human metronome. That carries over into live shows a lot – being able to play a lot better live. But, just like with the band Scott was in before Zao – Creation Is Crucifixion – was a lot faster, mathy-er, technical stuff. Scott's always been really good at that. And definitely could always do it, but there was some of the old clashes with style, not wanting to do this and that. It's nice now with Jeff, because he has the technical ability to do it and the willingness and openness to do certain things that we never did before. Like, it's not a big major, major change, just like little parts that have some really, really fast stuff in it. Or there's some more technical stuff – even if it's the beat itself that's kind of technical – not just necessarily meaning fast and crazy. In the end I think it's horrible, I guess, because it sucks and I think everyone is sick of people coming. I think every time it happens, it's just like, 'Oh man, it's just like a journey. We're just trying to make it 'til the end.' I don't know what that is or when that is, but it's hard when you're doing it and someone quits. You can't necessarily make them stay in the band. Each person can do their own thing. It's just hard when you have someone that's really into it and then you can kind of see them really starting to miss being at home and you can tell they're burning out from being out too much. It's sad to leave, but there's nothing you can do. At that point, we weren't, like, 'We just want to give up,' you know what I mean? It ended up, in my opinion, really a blessing in disguise. Jeff originally came on, he was just going to fill in for a tour or two. We've all known him for a long time and he was teaching drum lessons down the street from where I work. And initially he was kind of like stepping in to help us out for a couple tours. And then it ended up with everyone kind of clicked well, and it was a good time, so he ended up staying on for the ride. I'm happy about it. I'm happy that when people start hearing the new record. I think some of the new record takes away some of the staleness. It makes it a little more fresh to listen to. Not like "fresh," like, "Yo, that's fresh." (laughs)

"One of the things that initially turned me on to heavy music is, I guess, in a weird way it always kinda sounded desperate to me."

I started printing *Heaven's Metal Fanzine* on the side about two years ago and I planned on using different parts of this interview for a cover story for that publication in addition to the article in *HM*. Do you have any memories of the old *Heaven's Metal Magazine*?

Oh yeah, I still have a ton at home. My many memories, I remember... I mean, I'm getting old now, I guess. But it was probably '95 or '96, maybe, when...that was the first year I went to Cornerstone, and I remember going into... There's a Christian bookstore – Majesty. I don't know if they have 'em out where you are, but there's kind of like the bigger book or record stores around here. And I remember going in there and, I've never really been exposed to anything like that before. I went up on my own and I remember looking through some stuff and not being too familiar. My main memories were just getting it and a lot of the bands at the time, just being able to read and kinda get ideas and it kinda was a good magazine to help initially get into a lot of the heavy Christian music. That was more or less my main memories. I was like, 'This was really cool to have something out that you can pick it up and go through and figure out what you're into and like... if you're into death metal, you can find some death metal bands to listen to. If you're just hardcore or even like heavier rock stuff or whatever, it was just really cool to be... I don't know. I just remember the first story of Zao, meeting all the guys in different bands, like Overcome and Strongarm and being able to pick up the magazine and see them in there. It's weird to see people that are my friends in here. I still have the first time we were in it. I still have it framed in my house. It's not hanging up yet, because we're not allowed to hang anything on the walls. We have a "No Hanging Things on the Wall" policy in our lease. (laughter) So, it's just resting right now. Eventually, I want to be somewhere where I'm allowed to hang things on the wall.

How do you perceive Zao's sound in terms of musical genres, descriptions, and labels?

In all honesty, we have tried to figure that out. I don't know. Because I definitely I would say, 100% I would say it's not necessarily, like, hardcore. You know what I mean? And at the same time I don't think we're like a metal band. It's hard to say. In all honesty, we actually sat down before ... a lot of the long drives in the van will give you weird things to talk about. And we're like, 'What kind of music do you think we are?' I would say we're more of like a metal-ish band than a hardcore band; but I'm not sure. It's so weird now, because there's so many, like, sub-genres now, too. You have metalcore, hardcore, old school hardcore, new school hardcore. This and that. You string a bunch of words together. So, we were trying to figure it out. I think the one term we came up with that's the closest is kinda like "rock metal," ya know? It's more like chorded-out upbeat metal, but with kind of like a rock vibe to it. I don't know. On the new record, it kind of reminds me of ... not like pop punk, but more like old punk – like crusty punk rock meets... I have no idea what type of music we are! I think it's because we all listen to weird music... so we have so many different ideas about structure and things like that.

How unified or divided do you think hardcore and metal circles are these days?

Umm, I'd say I think it's cool to see them come together, but there's definitely different styles. Like, when you have the hardcore, you have more, like, the hardcore dancing type stuff. And then the metal is more like circle pits and moshing and stuff; so you see, like, a

clash between that. I think musically, there's not a horrible division between it... because there's so many good bands now, that you kind of have that mix with metal with, like, more of the hardcore-esque breakdowns and things like that. But I guess fan-wise there's more of a clash in the fans than there is in the actual music itself. I don't think it's like a horrible clash. It's just the fact that metal and hardcore are kind of bleeding in and out of each other. You have the two different... You have kids with almost two different backgrounds at shows. Your average metal bands tend to have more of, like, a production, you know what I mean?

Uh-huh.

Like lights and lots of gear. Big drum sets. The hardcore tends to be a little more, like, stripped down. If you look back, it's initially how it started, some people were tired of the big shows and all the fanciness and maybe dressing – like stage dress and things like that. It's really weird, because it's kinda going full circle; where hardcore started to kinda get away from that, and now it's like turning into that, kinda. Part of it is the fact that it's becoming more popular. And it's like, if you're a band... like old hardcore shows, like ten years ago, a sold-out... Even, like, big bands weren't playing to tons and tons of people. Even bands like Earth Crisis, it was huge back then to have 1,000 people. But now you can have a hardcore band that draws 3 or 4,000 kids. I think that's part of it, too. I think the bigger it gets, you gotta start putting a little production into it, because, you know, when ticket prices go up, you want to give people a little more for their money and stuff like that.

Yeah, plus you've got somebody that's, like, fifty rows back.

Yeah, so it's kind of weird. Hardcore kinda started like that – like thrash, like weird offshoots of metal. People that wanted to kinda bring it back to the roots, and then it started out and now it's coming around again. So, I'm curious to see what the next evolution is.

Yeah, what do you think it's gonna be?

Cuz it's like... A lot of that started, like, from that or whatever, so it'll be interesting to see, like... Cuz it kinda seems like everything will come to a pinnacle, and then it'll kinda go downhill. It'll reach the top and then slowly kind of die off. I don't think it's going to happen right away or anything, but when the fad of it... I think it's definitely popular right now. I don't think it's necessarily like a fad, but there's a lot more people involved in it than there used to be; which I think, too, is good for the bands, because they can make it playing music. They can get their music out there. But the only bad thing, too, is the bigger it gets the less... it loses a little something. Like the personal part of it. I feel like I keep saying this, but I remember way back when I used to go to shows and everyone knew the words and knew all what the bands were about and were singing about and things like that.



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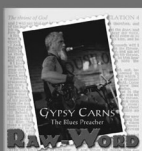
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Holy Soldier

INTERVIEW BY CHRIS BECK

You have a new DVD coming out called *Live, Rare, Raw*. What can fans expect to see on the DVD and where did you pull all of the old footage from?

Andy Robbins: I feel that the DVD came out brilliant, produced as a true collector's piece. Bill Bafford, (Roxx Productions) had produced a project like this with Once Dead upon their reunion a while back. We (H5) had always wanted something to have that would have great outtakes of tour footage, interviews, our music videos,

and the outtakes of us just being geeks whenever a camera was around. I think the viewers will especially like the preproduction footage that was shot in Fresno, CA, when we were writing the first album for 6 weeks on Michael Cutting's family ranch. You can actually see those classic songs take form before your eyes. There is some footage of us with Robbie Brauns, Steven Patrick, Eric Wayne and new footage of us with our new vocalist Don Russell.

So what was it like to get all the guys together to play a concert after so many years? Had you played any concerts together since the recording of *Encore*, which was in 1997?

The reunion show was pretty surreal. We all seemed to have had mixed emotions about it. It was exciting on one hand to have the lineup the "put us on the map" (debut album line up) together again playing only our classics. I guess I really thought that would not ever have happened, so when we performed and I saw the guys around me all playing really well and having a good time, I was kind of not sure if it was all a weird dream...

Why, after so many years, would you play a concert together? What exactly about the experience made you desire to do it?

Terry, Jamie and Michael are like brothers to me. We have been together since we were teenagers (21 years). We grew mature together, attended each others weddings and have seen each others successes and failures. We truly love each other unconditionally. There is a feeling in this core that is indescribable. We read each others minds and follow each others leads, so it is always a great experience when we play together. We all had grown into different lives for the most part. Jamie is married with two kids and has a great career; Terry is married with 3 kids (another on the way!). He really stayed the most musically active in the past years. Michael had been living in Boston for, like, 5 or 6 years and I never thought he would be able to come out for a 'one off' show. I am not sure what Steven had been doing. Myself, I had been on a musical hiatus for about 6 years before we all met back in October 04' in LA at a surprise birthday for Michael. It did not take long for us to start talking about music and playing before we all agreed to at least get together in a rehearsal situation and blow the dust off our songs.

Going all the way back to the days before when your self-titled album was released, *Holy Soldier* has been in existence for almost 20 years now. Did you think you would be playing *Holy Soldier* music for that long?

I really felt a strong calling when I was 16 years old about being in this band. Jamie, Robbie Brauns, Larry Farkas and Pete Kearney started the band in January 1985. Robbie basically introduced us all. (Sometimes that is not made clear). Each guy individually had a strong calling and vision that we would go pretty far. It is hard to say that without coming across as arrogant or egotistical, because I am not saying that... God did not need us. God obviously can use whoever He needs to fulfill His will here on earth. We were just willing. We really asked God to purge us a lot in the beginning. We had little or no experience, little or no gear and NO money. But, that all gave God a chance to be God. By the time the first record came out and we were traveling the world with #1 singles and a best selling album, playing on state of the art gear and staging, we could only give the glory back to Him and say we were happy to be along for the ride. Our longevity was just a continual commitment from each individual. If anyone wanted off, they were let off; if anyone wanted to stay they stayed. When we eventually called it quits, it was because

the doors just were not opening like they had been in the previous years.

Let's talk about the band's past some. Your self-titled album was distributed by A&M Records, you shot a video for the song "See No Evil." Simply put, many people consider this to still be a great album. Looking back, how did you think things would turn out for the band when the album was released?

Thanks for the compliment! We knew we had something special with *Holy Soldier* (debut). We all were very disciplined and committed to go out and work it (tours, video, promo, etc). We toured 45 cities that first year. For the fact that we changed singers between the 1st and 2nd leg of the tour due to Steven quitting on us, we did pretty good. Eric Wayne amazed audiences with stepping in and singing like Steven. Many did not know the difference. But we showed instability to A&M and to Word with losing Steven. If it was a bassist, drummer or maybe even a guitarist departing it would not have been as big of a deal (at least I don't think), but very few bands can survive after they change the singer, whether the singer is good or bad. Motley Crue had John Corabi after they booted Vince and John is and was 100 times the singer Vince would ever be, but it did not work. It isn't about talent at that point, it is about style. We all worked 10 times harder to re-position the band with a new identity.

You then released *Last Train*, another strong album with a wide variety of songs, which I have a few questions about. Why did you decide to do a Rolling Stones cover with "Gimme Shelter"?

Since the beginning of our band, we have always loved to put a good cover in our set. We are all huge fans of 70s music. It was not uncommon to hear us play a song by Zeppelin, Montrose, Kiss, etc, at one of our shows. When we decided to include a cover on one of our releases to show that side of us, we obviously had to have something that had a good message, something we could do justice to and also something that some people may not have heard before. We were down to "Shelter" and "Rock 'n' Roll Suicide" by David Bowie. I think we liked the idea of getting the backing vocalist for "Shelter," which is what pushed us more towards "Shelter."

The song "Tuesday Mourning" has some of the most emotional vocals I have ever heard. I've spoken with more than one person who says the song reminds them of a loved one that has passed. What was the original inspiration for this song?

The original lyric was written as a tribute to Michael Cutting's mother, who had passed away the year before. Michael was not in the band at the time we wrote the song. Steven felt compelled to write the lyrics as we were all very close to her. She really loved Holy Soldier. She filmed us during the pre-production of our debut cd in Fresno as we were staying on their ranch. So those who see the DVD, will hear her asking us questions as she is filming us. Scott Soderstrom had lost his mother a few years previous, so when we were writing the credits for the *Last Train* cd, we dedicated the song to Sharon Cutting Joan Soderstrom.

After *Last Train*, the band then made a significant

change musically with the release of *Promise Man*. How exactly did this change come about? Was the change made because that is the musical direction the band wanted to take? Was it done simply to keep up with the musical trends at the time? Was it driven by the change in lead singer?

You hit it, all three actually. I will say I feel *Promise Man* is a very good disc. I am partial really only to side 1 (or the first 6 songs). But look, most every big hard rock/metal act changed in the 90's; Guardian, Bride, us. It was part survival. And it also was that we all probably felt it was time that we could experiment more with our other influences. The bigger you were, the more you changed. Edgy music now had "drop d and low c" tuning, grunge had played a huge influence; Nirvana had killed the metal scene. The labels did not want to put out blatant metal or commercial hard rock releases. It was 1995; H5 had survived Steven's coming and goings, changing guitar players, losing our management, being dropped by A&M and Word for instability, losing Terry and still dealt with all the touring and controversy. We were all in the middle of disillusionment. Although we still had our faith and passion for Christ and playing, the music scene was rough. We were leaders now in an industry we really had tried to not be too consumed by. Being solely in the Christian industry was not in our initial vision. I wanted to avoid the "subculture stigma." We always had the ability and goods to be a "great secular band," we all had the hearts to walk with Christ. Our name and message was embraced by mostly Christian record buyers. We had shots taken at us the whole time we were together. "You are not Christian enough, your lyrics are too vague, and your look is too worldly." Although we felt like punching bags, we always just laughed at those comments. People will be people, you will never please everybody. It was when you meet a kid on the road or open that letter or email and somebody says, "God used you to change my life." Nothing else would matter for that moment. You get hooked on that high, that emotion, better than any drug. God is great! He would send a sign like that in some dark times to help us through. Did our music change? Yes. Was a big part due to a singer leaving? Probably. Did the new label want us to change? Yes. Were they only considering record sales to youth groups? Yes, 100%. That is why we knew our relationship with them would be short lived. We were on the other side of touring nightclubs, colleges, arenas, and whoever would have us. We toured with bands like Alice in Chains, Extreme, Hurricane, etc. Now it felt like "Fisher Price" mentality and taking steps backward to appease the label so they can "win big" with youth groups. I thought "youth groups? I am 28 years old? What the heck are they talking about youth groups?" I immediately started Spaceport Records as a last ditch effort to take back our creative control...

As we mentioned on *Promise Man*, Steven Patrick left and was replaced by Eric Wayne as lead singer of the band. And even more recently, Steven sang at the *Live, Rare, Raw* concert and once again is no longer with the band. Why, twice now, has Steven Patrick left Holy Soldier? What is the band's current relationship with him?

The reunion seemed fitting that Steven be there. I am sure the fans wanted it that way. It was good

for finalization. His agenda is not the same as ours. We just leave it at that. Our relationship with him is that we do not talk to him. He has good qualities, do not get me wrong. And I feel that he is a gifted songwriter. It just is a mutual decision that we do not work together. Holy Soldier may do much more or may do a little more. That is undetermined. We take each day together and opportunity one day at a time. We just are having a lot of good times reacquainting ourselves with each other and our families are all bonding. We are not setting out to start "a new wave of the Holy Spirit," a "new ride" or anything like that. People may be surprised to learn how down to earth we really are. Again, God does not need us. It is by His grace that all this is possible again. Being with the guys again is just a bonus.

I always felt like Holy Soldier had the talent, songs and charisma to make it big, that you were one of the few Christian heavy metal bands who could become very popular like Stryper. Yes, your albums sold reasonably well, you were signed to A&M Records, etc. Don't take this the wrong way, as I actually mean this as a compliment, but why do you think the band never broke it big?

No I do not take it the wrong way at all. We all hear that statement a lot. I appreciate your compliment! I am not trying to push all it off on Steven, but the truth is he came and went a lot. He was hired and quit many times. We tried. We really did. A&M and Word both told us that his departure cost us our deals. So I cannot lie and say it was something else. When you are in that situation and you are going to companies and asking them to invest their time, money and resources into you, they really scrutinize your stability. We all had great intentions, good hearts, the talent, but I understand looking back how severe his lack of commitment affected us. Please print that this statement is in no way to attack Steven's character, just stating facts.

You now have a new lead singer. Tell us a little about him.

Don Russell. He is actually the younger brother of Terry "the Animal" Russell. He actually sang back up vocals on Holy Soldier (debut) and *Last Train*. He is a great guy with a great spirit and completely easy going – a real blessing to have a round. He sings in any range all day long with out any effort. Kind of scary...

What exactly do you see in the future for Holy Soldier? Will you play other concerts? Will you write new material and release an album? If so, what style of music can fans expect?

I have written a lot of new material as has Michael. Jamie is starting to write too. Will we collaborate for H5? We would like to. I think we are just trying to enjoy what is happening now. Eventually if we want some more longevity we will have to release something, whether or not it is a full length cd or just a few tunes here and there is yet to be determined.



[To read more of this H5 interview, visit hmmag.com]



CRIMSON THORN | FINE METAL

INTERVIEW BY BRYAN KROTZER

Crimson Thorn is one the greatest metal bands in the history of Christian rock. When fans of Christian death metal list their favorite bands, they will inevitably list bands like Mortification, Crimson Moonlight... and Crimson Thorn! I was lucky enough to get to interview Miles Sunde and Luke Renno and get the latest news from the band.

Luke and Miles, great to talk to you again, my friends! What's this I hear about a big show with Becoming The Archetype, Frost Like Ashes, Crimson Moonlight, Aletheian, and Crimson Thorn? When and where will that be? Crimsonthorn.com doesn't show it in your GIGS section.

Luke: Great to talk to you again! This question reminded us to update the website, so it's up now. It's on July 9th here in Minnesota. It's an awesome lineup! It'll be the most intense night of metal that ever gave the glory to God!

Miles: Yeah it will be a lot of fun as well because we got to hang with the guys in Crimson Moonlight back in November at Nordic Fest. It will be a great reunion. In fact I was so impressed (both musically and personally) with the guys from CM that I wouldn't mind doing a tour with them (hint, hint, Pilgrim), but it would have to be in Europe where metal really reigns! We have always joked a "The Crimson Tour" would be so cool!

When can Crimson Thorn fans get a chance to hear the new Thorn album I've been hearing about for a couple years now?

Luke: Well, we're in the process of writing right now. We have three songs that we've learned and I have about four more in the works and everyone else has at least one or two. So we're going to try to learn them and record them as swiftly as possible, but we definitely will not rush the recording as we have had to do in the past due to money and short recording time limits. *Unearthed* and *Dissection* were very rushed and were almost on the same level as a "Live in the studio" recording. Mixing was as well. Now we have our own recording equipment and can spend as much time as we want. I know it's been a long wait, but we're hoping to make it worth it.

What about your solo project, Treading Dawn? Any progress on recording that one?

Luke: Treading Dawn is a black metal project that I've been writing songs for for years now. We've added some black metal influence on our last couple of cds, but I had songs that were just too different to be played in Crimson Thorn. They just weren't "Crimson Thorn." So, I decided to record them under a different name, "Treading Dawn." We won't start work on it until after we record the new Thorn cd. It's basically a Crimson Thorn project. I'll probably be doing most of it and, of course, Steve will do drums, but I'm sure everyone in the band will play on some part.

What fascinates me about you guys is how well known you guys are worldwide, really. Especially since you guys have always done things the Crimson Thorn way – not doing what record labels would ask you to do, like go on tour. Instead, you guys have always put your families first and should be commended for that. Still, you guys have played some amazing gigs and have played the biggest Christian festivals. Tell your fans what it was like playing in Norway and in Mexico in November of 2005?

Luke: Absolutely one of the most blessed times of my life! It was so incredible to go to both places and meet so many awesome Christian brothers and sisters. Hanging out with the guys from Frosthards is something I'll never forget. All of us said it was the best stage experience of our lives. I'll never forget the crazy Finnish people in the audience either. They are the best audience ever! I really want to go there some time. The only part of the trip I didn't like was going through security at the airport. First of all, I had fingernail clippers hooked onto my keys that I'd forgotten about. I couldn't believe how they overreacted. They were like "He's got a weapon!" and instantly I was surrounded by security guards with tasers, pepper spray and guns. I tried to hand it to the guy and I guess they were nervous, because I'm such a big guy or something, because one of them shot me. Then they all went crazy and started spraying me with pepper spray and zapping me with the tasers and hitting me with their sticks. I was like "Hold up! Hold up! Now just wait a minute here. There's

"God has blessed us and ... we play our music for His glory and to praise His Name."

been a misunderstanding." Then I guess they wanted me to fall down or something because one of them started driving one of those little golf carts into me. I said "Please stop before I get angry." Then they settled down a little bit and I said "My intentions are not hostile. Now, I guess you'll be wanting this as well." Then I pulled a large battle axe out of the back of my jacket and they started driving the cart into me and shooting me and everything all over again... That was all a joke, we had the time of our lives.

Miles: I agree with Luke, Norway and Mexico in different ways were such a blessing and really an education for us all. We were treated like kings and got the chance to do something Luke and I have always wanted to do and that was travel abroad with our music. We would really like to play Europe, Mexico again and even Brazil or other countries if the Lord allows us to do so, sometime before we are too old to move. Mexico was especially emotional for me. I was very moved by the generosity and hearts of the believers there. I encountered Jesus in the flesh by the actions of those beautiful people. It really was a life changing experience and I would do more shows like that in a heartbeat, because I know the people that came to see us and all the other bands were hungry, especially for Jesus and his free gift.

Are you guys still happy with Steve, the new drummer? How does his playing compare to Kevin Sundberg's? I know Steve impressed me when I heard him driving you guys!

Luke: I'd say more like giddy. We've been very blessed with Steve – both as a drummer and as a brother. It was an honor to serve with Kevin as long as we did and he was an awesome drummer. Steve has a different style than Kevin, so it's allowing us to move into new areas and we love it.

Miles: Man, that is an understatement, wow! I miss Kevin, because he was the other old man in the band, but I am completely blown away with Steve. He is an incredible addition to our band both in character and in his ability to play. I have thanked God many times for blessing us with a guy like Steve; I just wished he lived a bit closer so we could jam more often.

Are you guys still searching for the right bass player? Here's a chance for a free ad!!!

Luke: At this point, no. Andy'd left the band because of carpal tunnel and I went from bass to guitar. But then due to therapy, Andy's carpal tunnel improved and he was able to play guitar again. When he rejoined, I didn't want to go back to bass, because I wanted to start doing guitar solos and I'd been doing bass for fourteen years and decided I wanted the change, so we tried three guitars and we as well as audiences loved it and we were looking for a bass player, but people at shows kept telling us that we didn't need one, and we didn't feel we needed one with how low we tune down and the fullness of three guitars, so if God brings us the right person, we're open to it, but we're not looking.

Along that line, did your time spent playing guitar in Axehead Inc help you transition from bass and lead vocals, to guitar and lead vocals, now in Crimson

Thom?

Luke: Very much so. I know God used Axehead to get me ready for this transition. I'd never played guitar in a band before and thought it wouldn't be that different than bass, but it really is. Especially since bass is in the background and with guitar every single little bit of sloppiness is heard. I grew a lot as a guitar player. I tightened up quite a bit and have moved into the new area of guitar solos, which I absolutely love and have a lot of growing to do.

Luke, tell us about your role in the "Metal Bible." How did you get asked to contribute to that?

I was contacted by Johannes Johnson from Sweden about taking part. He felt led to make this bible with commentaries from people in metal bands just telling what reading the Word of God has done for their lives. There were a lot of contributors from people in Christian metal bands like me, as well as people from secular metal bands who've gotten saved such as Brian "Head" Welch (ex-Korn), Nicko McBrain (Iron Maiden), Tommy Aldridge (Whitesnake). They give them out at secular metal shows and stuff to get people interested. Maybe if they read how important reading God's Word is to us, maybe they'll check it out themselves.

Any parting words for the Crimson Thorn fans out there as they look forward to seeing you at Cornerstone, this July, 2006?

Luke: Not sure yet if Cornerstone is going to work. We haven't put it on our site yet, so if you see it on our site; you'll know we are indeed playing.

Miles: Actually Luke I did put it on our website, sorry man. We will be at the Sonshine festival and have other shows planned. Make sure to check out myspace.com/officialcrimsonthorn and download the songs if you haven't heard us. But most importantly, I just want to say that God has blessed us and that we play our music for His glory and to praise His Name. Our goal as a band is to see people brought to Jesus, so that they can have a personal relationship with Him as we do. There have been hard times in the band and we have had a lot of business dealings where we basically got ripped off, but none of that matters at all when someone tells me that our cd helped bring them to the Lord, or back to the Lord, or helped them bring a friend to the Lord, or blessed them in any way. God bless!!!

Miles: Feel free to e-mail us and check out our website crimsonthorn.com. Please keep us in prayer about the up and coming new CD. We love you all and most of all it is our intent to glorify and represent (though we are so feeble) Christ our Lord and introduce Him to as many people as possible. We hope to continue doing this gig (Lord willing) and I just want to personally thank Jesus for allowing us to continue with this project, it is by God's grace that we exist. We hope that we can encourage you in the faith and direct your lives in a sweeter worship of the King of Kings. HAIL Christ our Lord!





What Eluveitie Says...

A lot of people have been wondering about this influential band from Europe, so we thought we'd find out...

Please tell us what it's like in your live music scene over there? Please describe crowds, reaction at shows.

Chrigel: Hard to say for me, since I don't go to concerts very often. But I guess, our live music scene round here is more or less like everywhere in Western Europe. What I've learned through some live DVDs of bands like Machine Head or Lamb Of God is, that the crowds in America are more "rompy." I mean, here you can hardly see stuff like circle pits and so. At our own gigs, I guess, the crowds are similar to the ones at other metal concerts round here. Beside the fact, that lots of people show up with drinking horns and sometimes even some Celtic outfits. But also, this is nothing too special within the pagan metal scene. Normally at our shows, we have a pretty good feast with our fans... they're quite fervid and freakish, bawl along, dive the stage and so on. Good parties.

How theatrical are your shows? How much moving around vs. standing still and jamming do you do? Why is the visual element important to your live show? (or why not?)

Chrigel: I think our live performances are atmospheric and energetic. We partly work with sound effects (nature

sounds) and so on. Furthermore, our gigs always have some touchy, mystical, "ritual-like" moments; when we play the concert-opener, for example, (like "D'Vêritû agâgê d'Bitu"). Besides this, I guess, we perform just more or less usual, yet pretty vigorous metal shows. Well, we're not really standing still, there's pretty much happening on stage – lots of moving around, banging (circle banging looks quite okay, I guess, since some members' hair is pretty long, haha) and so on. Why? Don't know... it just happens that way, I think. What is worth to mention about our shows: We come up with quite a number of (partly historical) instruments, you know, all the bagpipes, fiddles and so on. What you get at an Eluveitie concert (musically) is what what you get from an Eluveitie CD – we don't reduce the instrumentation of the songs to make it easier for us on stage.

What are your thoughts when people wonder 'How can Christian artists involve themselves in a scene that's called pagan metal?' (I know that may seem silly, like asking a death metal band how they can play "death" metal, but people actually wonder about this stuff)

Chrigel: You're right; this question is asked from time to time. Well, first of all, I have to say: We're not "Christian artists"; so there can also not be a problem with it. ;) Eluveitie is not a Christian band at all. We have two people in the band though, that follow these ancient ways

of "those of the path," but the other bandmembers don't... so, this doesn't make Eluveitie Christian. Yes, we played a couple of times together with Christian bands, mostly because our label – Fear Dark – has signed some Christian bands. We're neutral and open here. I mean, if we play, for example, with bands like Grabak, which are lyrically dealing with occult/satanistic topics (which isn't very suitable to Eluveitie, haha), so then why shouldn't we play with Christian bands? We don't have a problem with this. And people that rebuke us because of this and claim that a pagan metal band should not play with, nor support Christian bands, we just count as bloody narrow-minded. ;) However, this all might be why some people sometimes ask questions on this topic. Well, but that was not your question actually. My personal thoughts are: This question is not "silly" (even if it sucks sometimes, haha), but it only reveals sincere concerns and interests, which is a good thing, basically. Besides the fact mentioned above, I believe that such concerns emerge from the general misunderstanding, that "pagan" or "celtic" are religious attributes. Personally I'm often pretty pissed off when people look at "celtism" as a religion, for it simply is none! The Celts are a folk, a whole culture – even one of the most important and formative in ancient Europe's history! They were/are own beliefs and philosophies maybe, yes! But it's not basically about religion. It is actually quite ignorant to reduce the Celtic culture to a religious affair only. I compare it with the American Indians (the Lakota for example): A Lakota definitely IS an Indian, you'll agree here. And maybe he also lives out the old Lakota religion and believes in "Wakan Tanka" ("God" in the Lakota language). But maybe he doesn't! Maybe he once met the Christian faith, for example, and became a follower of Jesus Christ. And then, so what? Isn't he a Lakota Indian anymore, just because he believes in Jesus? Of course not! He still is a Lakota, still an Indian and he'll always be. He just follows the Christian faith. And so it is the same with the Celts, you see? "Being celtic" has more to do with a certain ethnical affiliation than with a religion. So I basically think that such questions don't make too much sense in the end.

What is it about Celtic music and instrumentation that appeals to you guys?

Chrigel: Hard to say. Guess, it's the same that also appeals to fans of Eluveitie – ask them! ;) For me personally it's two things: Firstly it's just "my" culture, I mean, I just grew up with those sounds. Secondly, I love the speed and the wildness of the celtic tunes, as well as the somehow heart-rending harmonies and atmospheres in them.

How did you feel about Switzerland's accomplishments or performance in the Winter Olympics?

Chrigel: Ahm... what did we accomplish there? I have no idea bout that, haha. I'm not into sports at all. So, this all actually does not affect me in any way. I mean, it's just a contest, it's just a game in the end. And there's always somebody to win. Of course, it's cool if someone from Switzerland wins something, but actually I don't care at all. What I find pretty crazy about the whole thing is how much money is spent for such an event like the Olympics. I mean, come on, this is just

mad somehow... at the same time people are starving anywhere else (or there are some Celtic Pagan Metal bands, that could use this money very well too ;)).

When you look around at the political scene around the world (Europe, USA, the Middle East), what do you think the future holds? What are some scenarios you are afraid will happen?

Chrigel: This is a difficult question, because this is a BAND interview – we're nine people, and for sure there are nine different sights on this topic! Those themes are

haha.

What would you like to say specifically to Heaven's Metal readers (besides what you already touched on earlier)?

Chrigel: Nothing specific. If we once play in America (we never did so far) and we probably meet some and can have a couple of beers with them, I guess, there'll be enough to chat about.

"...Eluveitie is not a Christian band at all. We have two people in the band though, that follow these ancient ways of 'those of the path,' but the other bandmembers don't... so, this doesn't make Eluveitie Christian...."

something very personal and individual. For me personally, there are a couple of things, which look pretty scary... China emerging as a global power (I don't exactly "fear" it, but you just don't really know what you'll have to expect), or angry Islamists hating the Western world, or an also sometimes pretty aggressive American President who's quite quick to bomb a country he fears (sorry bout that... it's YOU who asked, haha), or global powers or individual states continuously disesteeming the laws of nature... Stuff like that. BUT: I actually don't really "fear" such stuff. I mean, I know that I personally cannot affect those world affairs. But I also know that humans (whatever they might do with all their wars and destructive ideas) are just a part of the lot. The "great wheel" (some lesson in celtic mythology, haha) is revolving on quite underwhelmedly and sovereignly, no matter what humans do. So what...?

What are your favorite songs on *Spirit*, and why?

Chrigel: Hard to say. Guess, "Your Gaulish War," "Of Fire, Wind & Wisdom," "The Song of Life" and "Dance of Victory" I personally like the most. Why? Mostly because of the riffing in these songs. Like that a lot.

Anything else you'd like to add?

Chrigel: Thanks a lot for your interest in our work! Sláinte!



Back to music, what are 5 or so bands that all readers of Heaven's Metal Fanzine should be familiar with?

Chrigel: Well, the 5 bands, they like most, I would say! And Eluveitie of course,

[To read more of this Eluveitie interview, visit hmmag.com]



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ALBUM REVIEWS



SAINT

THE MARK

Remember the first time you tried to play a classic metal song on guitar...or heard a garage band tear through "Livin' After Midnight?" Those bright lead and rhythm guitars seem to sound a tad slower once isolated? Much of classic metal is like this – simple. Still great, but much simpler than the complex jamming of more progressive sub-genres, like death or prog-metal. *The Mark* finds Saint in the sludge-rock, slowed down pace ... just a tad behind the slightly faster and more desperate-sounding *In The Battle*. The degree of separation between the two is ever so slight, where the end of a note will get bent with a confident swiftness that gives one just a sliver of attitude more than the other (Remember that scene in *Rock Star*, where Mark Wahlburg's character tells his guitarist to "play it right" after he doesn't bend that note during a run-through of "Long Live Rock and Roll??" That's what I'm talking about...). However, this is some solid stuff. While most of the album remains of a similar meter/mode, "The 7th Trumpet" deviates a little, and so does the tasty instrumental, "Gog & Magog." "Reap the Flesh" is the closest to "Breakin' The Law" ... more than Saint has sounded since *Too Late For Living*. They've done well with this album, but probably haven't "grown" or "stretched" at all (and that's fine). The theme of this almost concept album is the apocalypse, with even a reference to the "mark of the beast" right atop the barcode on the back. [Armor] Doug Van Pelt



NARNIA

LIVE IN GERMANY

An amazing live set, recorded in '03, released in '04 on DVD, and now this amazing show has been re-edited and remastered for the CD release. If you're familiar with Narnia's music, you know this is great stuff. Excellent mix, sonically brilliant and musically tight while maintaining that great live feel, this is an amazing 67-minute live set from an amazing commercial/power metal band. [Massacre] Jeff McCormack



HORRIFIC MAJESTY

IN SHADOWS ETERNAL

Combining emotional, sorrowful atmospheres with blistering, harsh guitars, Horrific Majesty's new EP draws inspiration from early Burzum to achieve its aspirations for black metal maelstrom. From the brooding, melancholy chords of "Lost in your Emptiness" to the ominous "World of Waste," the project led by Lord Horrific has evolved from ambient/experimental music from earlier demos into a more cohesive and complex output while maintaining its true underground grimness. Lyrically eloquent yet mysterious, Horrific Majesty's solemn odes to light in a dark realm are sure to find lots of appreciation amid black metal fans throughout the scene. [Son of Man] Ed Hellig



VENI DOMINE

23:59

Queensryche is back with *Operation Mindcrime 2*, and so is their closest clone, Veni Domine, with the curiously titled *23:59*. Both albums find each band in top form, while VD's Fredrik Sjöholm probably has more oomph to his high notes than the older Geoff Tate. Neither one has the number of timeless hits as the original OM album, which would be my only critique and reason for not stating is as better than that landmark album. Otherwise, we're treated to some solid power metal playing and soaring vocals. If you know Veni Domine's music, you know what to expect (hints of Sacred Warrior and Queensryche everywhere, but with their own stamp on it all). It's brilliant and nearly flawless playing, super-clean and full sonics. It's hard to pick a hit, but "Valley of the Visions" certainly stands out. And I swear that "Burdens" could be dropped right into the middle of *OM2* (or even *Legend*) and no one would be the wiser. It's numbing, slow, sweeping, and then swings majestic into an epic centerpiece. The lead guitar playing of Torbjörn "TW2" Weinesjö is beautiful in this song, "Valley..." (and just about any song here, including the slide in "Hyper Sober Nature"). In a word, amazing. [MCM] DVP



NARNIA

ENTER THE GATE

Aggressive right out of the box, Narnia kicks some serious hiney. Vocalist Christian Rivel sounds like a cross between Europe's Joey Tempest and Graham Bonnet. Their keyboards manage to help quicken the pace and add to the fullness, as opposed to standing out in the "guitars only" school of metal. Think Jon Lord of Deep Purple, for you old-schoolers. Carl Johan Grimmark just simply shreds all over this album. The drumming of Andreas Johansson is powerful and stands out as well. And the low end and rhythm section is held together so tight that you can't forget bassist Andreas Olsson fine contributions. The anthemic "Show All The World" is very characteristic of Narnia at their best. [Massacre] DVP

SLAVE TO THE SYSTEM

S/T

This band was originally a side-project of Damon Johnson and Roman Glick of Brother Cane and Scott Rockenfield and Kelly Grey of Queensryche. It was released as an indie project two years ago. Since then Spitfire Records heard the album and have re-released it with a lot better packaging and a re-mastering by Eddie Schreyer. Now they are a more serious working band that can actually tour about once a year, and maybe release an album every 18 months or so (the success or lack thereof of Queensryche is likely to dictate this frequency). Meanwhile, here is some super-high quality hard rock (a la *Rocks* era Aerosmith) that simply rules. While Damon Johnson has professed his faith in the pages of HM, some will wonder at his choice of words in the sultry ballad, "Live This Life." [Spitfire] DVP



BLISSSED

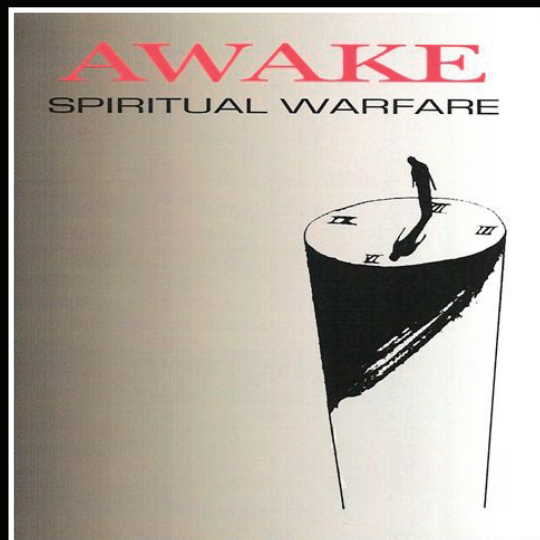
CORROSIVE

Blissed is back (sans R.Sweet) with a solid power-pop metal album. David Pearson's vocals are strong and melodic, but the songs aren't always as good as the parts. RIYL: Fear Not. [KR] DVP

Awake

Spiritual Warfare

Mijaces Records has issued the re-release of Awake's original debut cassette, *Spiritual Warfare*. This classic release has been digitally re-mastered and is available on compact disc for the first time. This CD captures the original progressive and intricate style that captivated audiences everywhere the band performed. The CD also includes a bonus track, not included on the original cassette release, of a late 92 rehearsal with drummer John Pace, along with the original demo version of "See Me Now" with Mike Botello on drums and on rhythm electric/acoustic guitar ending with the sounds of the very last Awake concert.



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THROWING DOWN THE GAUNTLET

By Steve Rowe

GETTING MORE CONCRETE

It says in Ecclesiastes Ch 9 V 10, "Whatever your hand finds to do, do it with all your might." I talk with many people, who tell me that, even after praying for many years, God has not told them what their calling in life is. In reality, what God wants us to do is probably something that our hands find naturally to do. I would never be so bold as to say that God called me to music ministry. It was just what my hands found to do, so I have done it with all of my might.

Before we see precious metal from our work for God – like seeing people saved – we need to lay a solid foundation with our life in God. Chances are, if you like fixing cars, this is what God is calling you to do to advance His Kingdom. As you fix people's cars for a good price and do your best and honest work, people will see that you are different. Then you can always fix the car for the old lady down the road for free who has no money. You can tell her that you want to service her car, because it is what God has called you to do.

It all begins with mixing the cement in the foundation of your life. This can be messy, as you put all the things together to pour the cement of the foundation of your natural calling to win souls for God's kingdom. As the cement becomes concrete, you have a strong foundation from which to work. With me, the cement process took 6 years before I started Mortification. All the years I played Jesus Metal in the 80's with Lightforce and the earlier bands was just cement. Just learning, laying a good foundation for the real work – like an apprenticeship someone would do to become a qualified car mechanic.

As the years go on, you can see the foundation of concrete turn into gold as people come to Faith in Jesus, as you have an opportunity to be influential

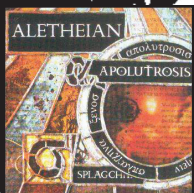


for God through your persistent work to be Good News through your life's witness. So, always remember this: Your calling in God is probably as simple as whatever your hand finds to do. But, make sure what your hand finds to do does not become for your own glory, but only for the glory of God. Then you will see the concrete start to turn into gold and know that you are fulfilling God's calling in your life.

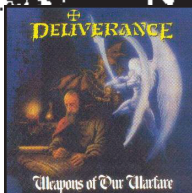
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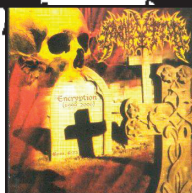
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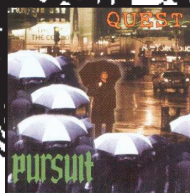
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SOUND ADVICE

By Pastor Bob

CONSPIRACIES

I have always enjoyed a good conspiracy theory. I am old enough to remember the days when President John F. Kennedy was shot. I remember well the principal of our school interrupting our class on the loudspeaker announcing that the president had just been shot. We were all in shock. No one knew if he was dead or alive, since they didn't release that information right away. In the days following, we would learn all the horrible details of his death. But I will never forget the time one of my classmates "informed" me that the President was actually still alive. A man had been spotted leaving the hospital in a wheelchair wearing his shoes, with dark sunglasses and a concealing hat. He continued to give me all the details on why the government of the United States had decided to announce that he was dead, when in fact, he was now crippled.

Then, there was the Howard Hughes cover-up. I remember reading "reports" of Howard being spotted in Las Vegas, and renting whole floors of a hotel just to keep people from knowing that he was still alive. I'm sure he and Elvis are still to this day hiding out in the penthouse of the Sahara Hotel!

I am not surprised that we now have some pretty amazing 9/11 conspiracy theories surfacing on the net. One video that someone sent me was very convincing. Someone had gone to great lengths to attempt to prove the government of the United States was involved in both the bombing and a massive cover up of details.

The Da Vinci Code movie was another one of those "conspiracy theories" – but this one was about Jesus Christ. Of course, it was not the first time someone had gone to great lengths to shoot some holes in the Christian faith. But I was a bit surprised to see how many Christians jumped on the bandwagon of protest. During the week the movie was released, it seemed that every televangelist on the air had a video or booklet available to warn our family and neighbors about this conspiracy against the Christian faith – for our donation of only \$20 to their ministry. It was actually big business for Christian marketing that week!

So, with all of this interest we have in conspiracy theories, I wonder how we are able to let the largest and most subtle – the mother load conspiracy – go virtually unnoticed.

Satan is absolutely committed to seeing the Church destroyed. His strategy is to divide and conquer. He knows that if he can get us to fight and gossip among ourselves, that we will lose power and focus. Paul warns us in 1 Corinthians 1:10, "I appeal to you, brothers, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that all of you agree with one another so that there may be no divisions among you and that you may be perfectly united in mind and thought." I wonder if our energies might be better spent trying to heal our divisions within the Body of Christ rather than pointing out the obvious contradictions in a fictional Hollywood movie.

In these evil times we will rise!



FD024

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FD023

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